



Department of Justice

Acting United States Attorney Lawrence G. Brown
Eastern District of California

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PLACER COUNTY MAN INDICTED ON CHILD PORNOGRAPHY CHARGE

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—Acting United States Attorney Lawrence G. Brown announced today that a federal grand jury returned a four-count indictment charging MANUEL KEITH VASQUEZ, 32, of Roseville, Calif., with possessing, receiving, and transporting visual depictions of minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct.

This case is the product of a investigation by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Sacramento Valley High Tech Crimes Task Force.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Laurel D. White, who is prosecuting the case, the indictment alleges that in February of this year, VASQUEZ possessed at least one computer hard drive that contained visual depictions of minors engaged in sexually explicit conduct. The indictment also alleges that on March 24, 2008, VASQUEZ received such images, and that on February 23, 2008, and again on October 14, 2008, VASQUEZ used the Internet to transport child pornographic images to another in interstate commerce. The government is also seeking forfeiture of the computers, hard drives, and other electronic storage devices that VASQUEZ used to possess, receive, and transport the child pornography.

“People who download and possess child pornography are truly putting the world’s youth at risk,” said Daniel Lane, the assistant special agent in charge who oversees the ICE Office of Investigations in Sacramento. “We’re talking about images and scenes involving real children who are being sexually abused and exploited in horrific ways. ICE will continue to work closely with its law enforcement partners here and around the world to target those who commit these types of crimes and see they are brought to justice.”

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood (PSC), a nationwide initiative to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice. Led by United States Attorneys’ Offices and the Criminal Division’s Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, PSC marshals federal, state, and local resources to locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information, visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov or call the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Eastern District of California and ask to speak with the PSC coordinator.

ICE’s involvement in the investigation was part of Operation Predator, an ongoing ICE initiative targeting those who prey upon and sexually exploit our nation’s children - including Internet pornographers, international sex tourists, and foreign national sexual predators. Since the initiative’s launch six years ago, ICE special agents have arrested more than 11,000 individuals nationwide.

The maximum statutory penalty for a violation of possession of child pornography is 10 years in prison. The receipt and transportation charges each carry a five-year mandatory minimum to 20-year maximum prison term. The VASQUEZ indictment, however, provides

notice that VASQUEZ has a prior conviction for lewd or lascivious conduct with a minor under 14 years of age. In light of that prior conviction, the mandatory minimum and maximum sentences are much higher. The actual sentence, however, will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

The charges are only allegations and the defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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